

# **Summary of March 11, 2010 Neighborhood Meeting**

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## **Study Area: Head of the Island, Red Rock Corner, and other Town Hill Neighborhoods**

### **Overview:**

With nearly 30 people in attendance, this meeting was well represented by the public. And, while Town Hill continues to present many challenges in gathering a consensus of opinion, it appears there may be room for compromise. When individual view points are distilled, there may be one goal in mind: to allow development that is not only economically profitable, but also environmentally and socially responsible.

Property owners expressed concerns regarding their future ability to realize a reasonable economic return from their land. Others expressed equally as valuable wishes that new development respect the scenic character of MDI as a tourist destination. As such, it seems that the compromise position is a mix of open space and development. Therefore it is important to investigate methods which will regulate the visual impact of development, but also maximize the economic return. This suggests that uniform development standards for the entire study area may not be appropriate. In fact, some areas may be more appropriate for intensive commercial development than others, particularly Red Rock Corner. When considering the future of Town Hill, Red Rock Corner, and the Head of the Island, it is essential to remember that careful planning today will enable sustained and positive economic growth in the future.

### **Summary of Comments for Head of the Island:**

Comments centered on several important aspects of this area: 1) it is visitors and residents first impression of Mount Desert Island, 2) the fact that this is a busy travel corridor, and 3) the presence of Prime Farmland.

- As a travel corridor this area does not present the ideal conditions for residential development. High volumes of traffic travel Route 102 and Route 3 daily during the summer months. Consequently commercial development should respect the scenic quality of the island, and be of high quality construction. Allowed uses should not generate excessive traffic flows so as to minimize impacts to the already heavy traffic pattern.
- Buffering, screening, and landscaping should be encouraged for any uses (residential or commercial) visible from Route 102 and Route 3.
- Perhaps commercial agriculture could be encouraged as a means to preserve open space, capitalize on the presence of prime soils, and enable property owners to realize a fair economic return on their property.
- Research and implementation of Development Impact Fees may be in order to raise funds for Town sponsored sewer, water, traffic and parkland. Some residents expressed a desire for a boat landing and public park on the water.
- There was overall consensus that the Land Use Ordinance should be flexible and allow more site specific review, based on the individual merits of a project. This could be implemented through the adoption of a Conditional Use Permit system, which would allow a greater number of uses in certain districts, with the review and approval of the Planning Board.
- It was suggested that Route 102 be designated as a National Scenic Byway.
- Height standards should be analyzed as the current 40 feet seems excessive.

### **Summary of Comments for Red Rock Corner:**

Comments centered on several important aspects of this area: 1) there is existing commercial development in this area, the scale of which could be used as a guide for future development, 2) critical environmental features surround this area, and new development should be of a high standard in order to protect these resources.

- This area is viable for commercial development, however there was no consensus as to the size of development that should be allowed. Some residents expressed the need to promote strictly local business, while others were in favor allowing chain businesses to develop.
- Important environmental considerations such as the presence of Critical Rural, and stream protection areas are should be key considerations when determining the size of development that is allowed.
- Water, sewer, traffic and parkland were also of critical concern for this area. Development Impact Fees should be researched.
- Many residents asked that the residential areas that currently exist be protected from future development. These residents enjoy the small sense of community that currently exists.
- If land is to be dedicated for conservation, the Town may wish to explore compensation for landowners
- Light pollution and increased noise are also concerns for many residents.

